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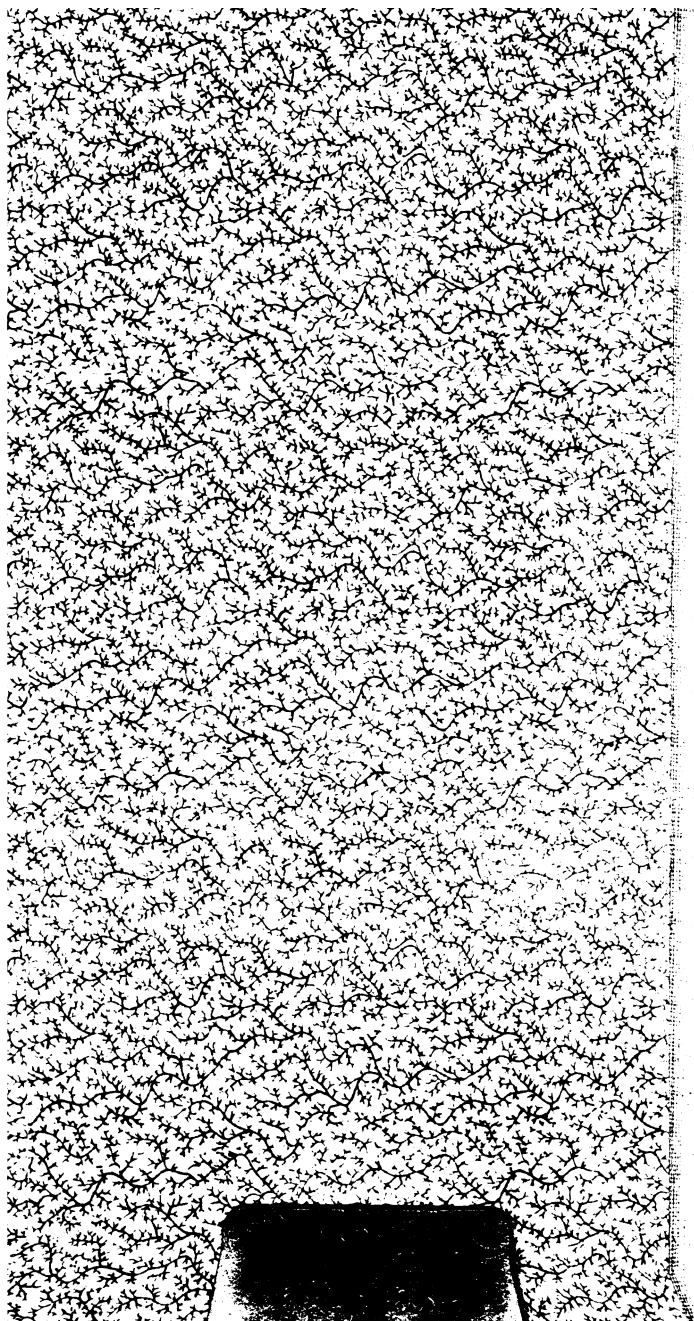
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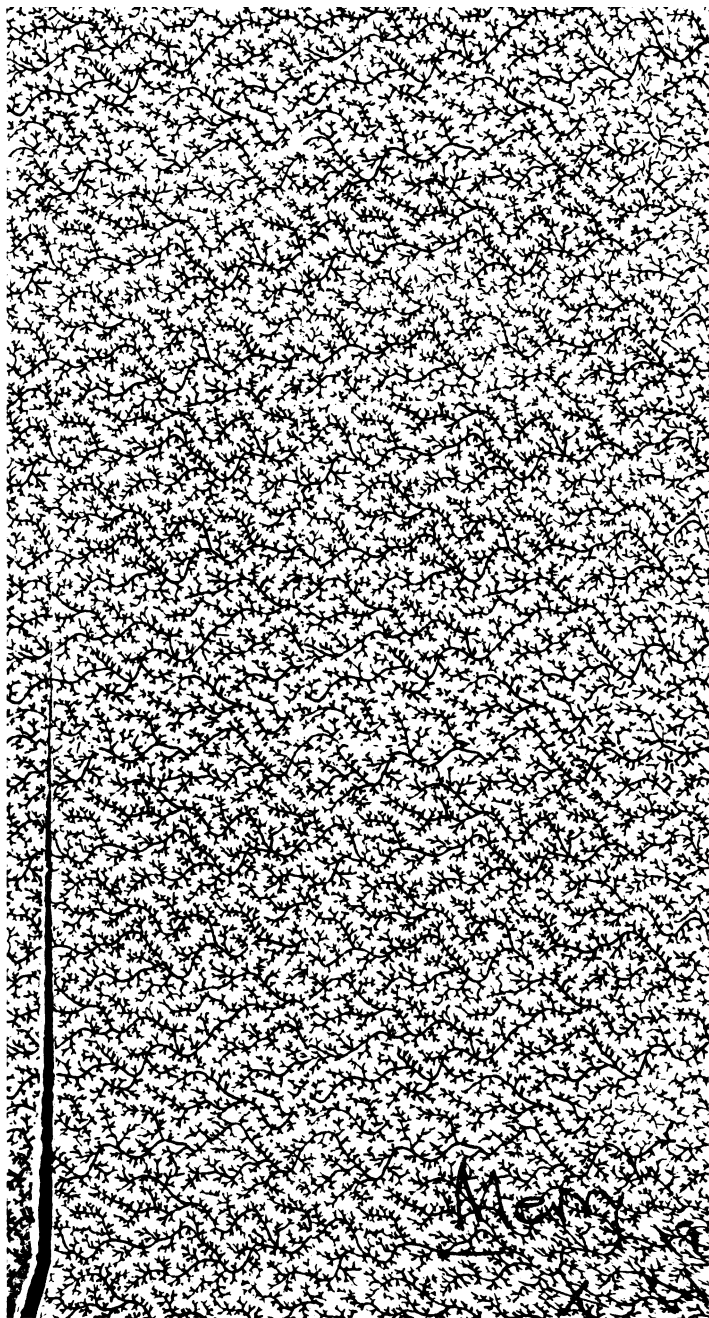
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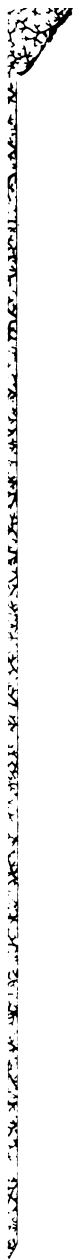
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S C E N E R Y .

ACT ONE.

SCENE 1 — Landscape View of Windsor Castle, 5 g.

Set Balustrade, cross stage, 4 g. Steps c.

Set Antique House, 8 E. R. H. door (large) practical backed by interior.

SCENE 2 — Plain Oak, 2 g.

SCENE 3 — Pannel Chamber, 2 g. D. F. R. H. practical, backed by interior.

ACT TWO.

SCENE 1 — Same as scene 1st, act 1, 5 g.

SCENE 2 — Plain Oak, 2 g.

SCENE 3 — Wood, 4 g.

ACT THREE.

SCENE 1 — Wood Landscape, 5 g, Cut Wood, 8 g. centre. We braced and cleats behind for Slender to climb up to opening.

SCENE 2 — Landscape, or old street, 1 g.

SCENE 3 — Antique Oak Chamber, 8 g. Set door, 2 E. R. H. to open on stage. Set door, 1 E. L. H. A fire place in centre.

SCENE 4 — 2 D. Oak, 1 g.

SCENE 5 — Plain Oak, 2 g.

ACT FOUR.

SCENE 1 — Same as 3d Scene, Act 3d, 8 g.

SCENE 2 — Antique House flats, 2 g. D. F. R. C. practical, backed by interior.

ACT FIVE.

SCENE 1 — Old Street, 1 g.

SCENE 2 — Wood, 2 g.

SCENE 3 — Moon light Wood, 5 g. Herne's Oak in c. Moon lighted.

PROPERTIES.

ACT ONE.

SCENE 1 — Green cloth down. Crutch cane for Sir John. Salver with four wine glasses and wine ready in house, 3 E. R. for Anne Page. Large sword and belt for Bardolph. Sword and belt for Nym. Sword and belt for Pistol. A pair of white gloves for Slender.

SCENE 2 — Two blank letters (alike) for Sir John.

SCENE 3 — Two Antique chairs on. Blank letter and long gold-headed cane for Dr. Caius. Small green casket ready, D. F. R. H. for Mrs. Quickly. Scarlet cloak and two rapiers ready, D. F. R. H. for Rugby.

ACT TWO.

SCENE 1 — Two written letters for Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. Cane for Ford.

SCENE 2 — Plain table. One oak chair and large arm-chair carried on from 2 E. R. and placed in centre, 1 G. Large purse of money for Ford. Salver covered with a white napkin, on it a tankard of ale, and a napkin folded up on it, ready, 1 E. L. for Bardolph. Purse for Falstaff.

SCENE 3 — Scarlet cloak for Dr. Caius. Two rapiers for Rugby.

ACT THREE.

SCENE 1 — Hymn book for Evans. Rapier and Evans' cloak for Simple. Rapier (for Dr. Caius) and scarlet cloak.

SCENE 3 — Large buck basket with two handles to it containing a quantity of dirty linen ready, 2 E. L. H. Bunch of door keys and cane for Ford.

SCENE 5 — Plain table in centre. On R. of table one oak chair. On L. of table a large arm-chair. Salver covered with a white napkin, on it a quart tankard containing a gill of ale, and a folded napkin ready, 1 E. L. H. for Bardolph.

ACT FOUR.

SCENE 1 — Large buck basket discovered in centre, containing a quantity of dirty linen, a very large bundle tied up in a white sheet and white muslin on top. Cane for Ford. Antique table and two chairs on L. H. Table, looking-glass, two lighted candles, 3 E. R. H. and woman's dress complete with bonnet, etc., ready, 3 E. R. for Sir John.

ACT FIVE.

SCENE 2 — Eighteen white wands and eighteen white conical paper caps for Fairies.

SCENE 3 — Buck's head and large heavy chains for Sir John. Four lighted torches for servants.

C O S T U M E .

Sir John Falstaff. — Scarlet cloak, buff jacket and scarlet breeches, black velvet hat, and russet boots.

Shallow. — Brown old English dress, trimmed with orange.

Slender. — White old English dress, trimmed with crimson.

Fenton. — Green old English dress, trimmed with orange color.

Mr. Page. — Slate colored old English dress, trimmed with crimson.

Mr. Ford. — Drab colored old English dress, trimmed with green. Brown cloak for a disguise.

Sir H. Evans. — Black old English dress. Second dress (5th Act.) white robe with white conical paper cap.

Dr. Caius. — Black coat and breeches, brocaded waistcoat, red cloak and muff.

Bardolph. — Black old English dress, trimmed with scarlet.

Pistol. — Buff leather old English dress, trimmed with scarlet.

Simple. — Orange colored old English dress, trimmed with green.

Nym. — Drab colored old English dress, trimmed with green.

Robin. — Scarlet dress, round black hat edged with feathers. Dressed after the fashion of Falstaff.

Fairies. — (5th Act.) Long white robes with white conical paper caps.

Children — Six as Fairies.

Mrs. Ford. — Black velvet gown, ditto stomacher, laced with blue; blue satin petticoat, point apron; black velvet hat, trimmed with beads and blue satin ribbon.

Mrs. Page. — A dress like Mrs. Ford.

Anne Page. — Pink sarsnet petticoat, black velvet body with tabs trimmed with pink; black velvet hat, trimmed with beads and pink ribbon.

Mrs. Quickly. — Black silk gown, scarlet petticoat, point apron, and black hat, trimmed with scarlet.

REMARKS.

THIS delightful comedy is perfect, if the term perfection can be applied to any creation of human genius. Its general merit has been much undervalued by directing the attention solely to Falstaff, and then comparing him with the Falstaff of the two Henrys; between the two there can be no comparison, but the play is to be tried as a whole, not by the value of a single character; and still less by comparing that character to one of unrivalled excellence. In criticising this comedy we should consider Slender, Shallow, Calus, the Parson, and Dame Quickly; all of which characters are continued with unbroken consistency to the end. The plot too is no less admirable, though it is constructed on very different principles from those which govern the modern drama. Plot, with the poets of the old school, was subservient to character and passion; indeed it was nothing more than a vehicle for their exhibition; with us the fable is a primary object; we look for a multitude of events; expectation must be awakened by mystery and gratified by surprise; every incident must be touched with a rapid hand, and the whole in fact, must be a dramatized romance. That plays, so constructed, cannot last beyond the hour is sufficiently evident; when once seen their interest ceases, for that interest is in mystery or surprise, neither of which consist with a previous knowledge. This evil is in a great measure to be attributed to the superabundance of criticism, which is daily assailing authors; they are not left to their own discretion, but must subscribe to rules dictated by caprice and supported by ignorance. It is with poetry as with governments; in either case you may legislate too much; in either case a slavish obedience cramps genius, or it rebels, and is destroyed by the power that would fetter it. It was not so in Shakspeare's time; hundreds of Plays remain to us, which notwithstanding many scenes of high energy and high poetic feeling would not now be tolerated a single hour, and for no other reason than what in the jargon of modern criticism would be styled the weakness of their plots.

In Master Slender is an admirable example of what is so difficult to be defined, humor; when he would court Anne Page, and, in the lack of matter, takes occasion from the dogs barking, to inquire — "Be there bears in the town?" every reader feels the humor. While wit seems to consist in the play of words, unequal comparisons, and quaint allusions, humor appears to be a part of character; and its comprehension therefore, is less likely to be confined to one time or one nation.

The line which divides Slender from his cousin, the Justice, is extremely fine, but it is kept inviolate with a skill that may be safely pronounced

matchless; both are gulls, that like the citherns of old in the barber's shops, are produced for every one to play upon; but still the characters are so divided in thought, and in the expression, that it is impossible to mistake one, though in the absence of the other. Slender is the shadow of his cousin, and differs from him precisely in the same degree that the shadow does from its substance.

Of Falstaff it is difficult to write in appropriate terms; he is neither just, nor brave, nor wise, nor kind, nor temperate, nor generous, but the very opposite of all these; and yet he excites as much sympathy as if he possessed every virtue under heaven; when he cheats, and betrays, and plunders, his victims excite derision, such is the force of his wit and humor. The right of compassion seems not to extend to their case, and when at last he is punished, we know not whether more regret is not excited that his wit is foiled, than pleasure that his vice is punished.

But the beauty of this comedy is not confined to its individual character; as a whole it is a composition of the highest order in which light and shadow are blended with matchless skill. Each character is admirably calculated for the display of those around it; the various persons act upon each other with the reciprocity of the various parts in a landscape; it is not that this oak is beautiful, or that mountain lofty, or the near river magnificent; it is that the individual parts harmonize; each becoming more beautiful in itself as it adds to the beauty of the whole.

The public are familiar with the *MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR*, chiefly through the frequent performances of Mr. J. H. Hacket; whose conception, and embodiment of the fat knight, is generally conceded to be the most perfect extant. Messrs. C. Bass, W. E. Burton and J. G. Gilbert, have each successfully personated Falstaff, and have each presented new points, and evinced careful study of the character, and a thorough appreciation of the author; eliciting the approbation of their audience and the approval of the press. We shall leave it for the critics to decide which of these gentlemen is entitled to most praise for their efforts, trusting that the public will often have an opportunity of witnessing them.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A view of Windsor Castle in the distance. Set Antique House, 3 E. R. H. with large door, practical. Set Balustrade across the stage.*

Enter SHALLOW, EVANS and SLENDER, L. H. 1 E.

Shal. (R. H.) Sir Hugh, persuade me not: I will make a Star-chamber matter of it: if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

Slén. (L. H.) In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram*.

Shal. Ay, cousin Slender, and *cust-alorum*.

Slén. Ay, and *ratolorum* too: and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself, *armigero*; in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero*.

Shal. Ay, that we do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slén. All his successors, gone before him, have done't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

Shal. It is an old coat.

Eva. The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant: it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies — love.

Slén. I may quarter, coz?

Shal. You may, by marrying.

Eva. It is marring, indeed, if he quarter it.

Shal. Not a whit.

Eva. Yes, py'r-lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures: but that is all one. If Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I will be glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and compromises between you.

Shal. Ha! o'my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

Eva. It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it; and there is also another device in my prain, which, peradventure, prings goot discretions with it. There is Anne Page, which is daughter to master George Page, which is pretty virginity.

Slen. Mistress Anne Page? she has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

Eva. It is that fery verson for all the 'orld, as just as you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of monies, and gold, and silver, is her grandsire upon his death's-bed give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old; it were a goot notion, if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between master Abraham, and mistress Anne Page.

Shal. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pounds?

Eva. Ay, and her father is make hër a petter penny.

Shal. I know the young gentlewomen; she has good gifts.

Eva. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.

Shal. Well, let us see honest master Page; is Falstaff there?

Eva. Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar, as I do despise one that is false; or, as I despise one that is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for master Page. (*Crosses and knocks at R. H. D. SHALLOW and SLENDER confer apart, L. C.*) What, ho! 'pless your house here

Enter PAGE, R. H. 3 E.

Page. (R.) Who's there?

Eva. (C.) Here is your friend, and justice Shallow; and here

young master Slender; that, peradventures, shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

Page. I am glad to see your worships well; I thank you for my venison, master Shallow.

Shal. Master Page, I am glad to see you; much good do it your good heart! I wish'd your venison better; it was ill kill'd; — how doth good mistress Page? — and I thank you always with my heart; la; with my heart.

Page. Sir, I thank you. I am glad to see you, good master Slender.

Slender. How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say, he was outrun on Cotsale.

Page. It could not be judg'd, sir.

Shal. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

Page. Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

Eva. It is spoke as a christians ought to speak.

Shal. He hath wrong'd me, master Page.

Page. Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

Shal. If it be confess'd, it is not redress'd; is not that so, master Page? He hath wrong'd me; indeed, he hath; at a word, he hath; believe me; Robert Shallow, esquire, saith, he is wrong'd.

Page. Here comes Sir John.

Enter PISTOL, NYM, BARDOLPH, FALSTAFF and ROBIN, R. H. 3 E.

ROBIN.

EVANS.

FALSTAFF. SHALLOW.

PISTOL.

PAGE.

NYMN.

BARD.

SLENDER.

Fal. Now, master Shallow; you'll complain of me to the king?

Shal. Knight you have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Fal. But not kiss'd your keeper's daughter?

Shal. Tut, a pin! this shall be answer'd.

Fal. I will answer it straight; I have done all this; that is now answer'd.

Shal. The counsel shall know this.

Fal. 'Twere better for you, if it were known in counsel; you'll be laugh'd at.

Eva. (*Coming forward L. c.*) *Pauca verba*, Sir John; good worts.

Fal. Good worts! good cabbage; Slender I broke your head; what matter have you against me? (*Retires up L.*)

Slen. Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you; and against your coney-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym and Pistol. They carried me to the tavern, and made me drunk, and afterwards picked my pocket. (*SHALLOW and PAGE confer in back ground L. c.*)

Bar. (*On R. stalking across to SLENDER, half-drawing sword, going up L. and crossing round behind to R.*) You Banbury cheese!

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Pist. (*Stalking a cross from R. imitating BARDOLPH, and round to R.*) How now, Memphostophilus?

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Nym. (*Advancing. Same business as BARDOLPH L. round to R. H.*) Slice, I say! slice, that's my humor

Slen. Where's Simple, my man? Can you tell, cousin?

Eva. (*Coming forward L. c.*) Peace; I pray you! Now let us understand: There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand; that is—master Page, *fidelicet*, master Page; and there myself, *fidelicet*, myself; and the three party is, lastly and finally mine Host of the Garter.

Page. We three, to hear it, and end it between them.

Eva. Fery goot; I will make a prief of it in my note book; and we will afterwards 'ork upon the cause, with as great discreetly as we can.

Fal. Pistol—

Pist. (*R. c. advancing.*) He hears with ears!

Eva. (*L. c.*) What phrase is this, *He hears with ear*? Why, it is affectations.

Fal. (*c.*) Pistol, did you pick master Slender's purse?

Slen. (*L. H.*) Ay, by these gloves did he, (or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else,) of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovel-boards, that cost me

two shilling and two pence a-piece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

Fal. Is this true, Pistol?

Eva. No; it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

Pist. (*Crosses to EVANS, L. C.*) Ha, thou mountain-foreigner!

Sir John, and master mine,

I combat challenge of this latten bilbo:

Word of denial in thy labras here. (*Crosses to SLENDER, L. C. then goes up L. H. and crosses behind to R. H. To SLENDER.*)

Word of denial; froth and scum, thou liest.

Slen. (*L. H.*) By these gloves, then 'twas he.

Nym. (*Crosses to SLENDER L. C.*) Be advis'd, sir, and pass good humors; I will say, *marry trap*, with you, if you run the nut-hook's humor on me; that is the very note of it. (*Goes up L. H. crosses behind to R. H.*)

Slen. By this hat then he in the red face had it; for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

Fal. What say you, Scarlet and John?

Bard. (*R.*) Why, sir, for my part, I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.

Eva. It is his five senses; fie, what the ignorance is!

Bard. (*Crosses to SLENDER L. C.*) And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashier'd; and so conclusions pass'd the careires. (*Goes up L. H. crosses behind to R. H.*)

Slen. Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 'tis no matter; I'll never be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil company, for this trick; if I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of heaven, and not with drunken knaves.

Eva. So heaven 'udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

Fal. Ha! ugh! you hear. You hear all these matters denied gentlemen; you hear it. (*PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and NYM retire up the stage, 3 e. in centre.*)

Enter ANNE PAGE, R. H. 3 e. with wine, who comes down R. H.

Page. Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within.

(*Exit ANNE PAGE, R. H. 3 e.*)

Slén. O heaven ! this is mistress Anne Page.

Enter MRS. FORD, L. H. 1 E. crosses to C. MRS. PAGE, R. H. 3 E.

Page. How, now, mistress Ford ?

Fal. Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met ; by your leave, good mistress. (*Kissing her. FALSTAFF goes to them joyfully, offers them his arms, and conducts them off very lovingly into house, 3 E. R. H. ROBIN follows.*)

Page. Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner ; come gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness. (*Exit 3 E. R. H. PISTOL, NYM, and BARDOLPH advance towards SLENDER and threaten him with their swords ; SLENDER shrinks in fear of them and they exeunt in a very pompous manner, 3 E. R. H.*)

Slén. I had rather than forty shillings I had my book of songs and sonnets here.

Enter SIMPLE, L. H.

How, now, Simple ! where have you been ? I must wait on myself, must I ? You have not the book of riddles about you, have you ?

Sim. Book of riddles ! why, did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake, upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas ?

Shal. (R. C.) Come, coz ; come, coz ; we stay for you. A word with you, coz ; marry, this coz ; there is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off, by Sir Hugh, here ; do you understand me ?

Slén. (L. C.) Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable ; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

Shal. Nay, but understand me.

Slén. So I do, sir.

Eva. (C.) Give ear to his motions, master Slender ; I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

Slén. Nay, I will do, as my cousin Shallow says ; I pray you, pardon me ; he's a justice of peace in his country, simple though I stand here.

Eva. But that is not the question ; the question is concerning your marriage.

Shal. Ay, there's the point, sir.

Eva. Marry, is it; the very point of it; to mistress Anne Page.

Slen. Why, if it be so, I will marry her, upon any reasonable demands.

Eva. But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold, that the lips is parcel of the mouth; therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

Shal. Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

Slen. I hope, sir, I will do as it shall become one that would do reason.

Eva. Nay, you must speak possible, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

Shal. That you must: Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

Slen. I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

Shal. Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz; what I do, is to pleasure you, coz: Can you love the maid?

Slen. I will marry her, sir, at your request; but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance; when we are married, and have more occasion to know one another, I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt, but if you say, *marry her*, I will marry her, that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

Eva. It is a fery discretion answer; save the fault is in the 'ort dissolutely; the 'ort is, according to our meaning, resolutely; his meaning is good.

Shal. Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

Slen. Ay, or else I would I might be hang'd, la.

Enter ANNE PAGE, R. H. 3 E.

Shal. Here comes fair mistress Anne. Would I were young, for your sake, mistress Anne!

Anne. The dinner is on the table; my father desires your worships' company.

Shal. I will wait on him, fair mistress Anne. (*Exit R. H. 3 E.*)

Eva. Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace.

(*Crosses and exit R. H. 3 E.*)

Anne. (C.) Will't please your worship to come in, sir?

Slon. (L. C.) No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

Anne. The dinner attends you, sir.

Slon. I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go, wait upon my cousin Shallow. (*SIMPLE crosses behind to R. H. and exit R. H. 3 E.*) A justice of peace sometimes may be beholden to his friend for a man: I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead. But what though? yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

Anne. I may not go in without your worship; they will not sit, till you come.

Slon. I'faith, I'll eat nothing: I thank you as much as though I did.

Anne. I pray you, sir, walk in.

Slon. I had rather walk here, I thank you: I bruised my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; three veney's for a dish of stewed prunes; and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? Be there bears i'the town?

Anne. I think, there are, sir; I heard them talk'd of.

Slon. I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at it, as any man in England. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

Anne. Ay, indeed, sir.

Slon. That's meat and drink to me now; I have seen Sacker-son loose, twenty times; and have taken him by the chain; but I warrant you, the women have so cried and shriek'd at it, that it passed; but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favor'd rough things.

Enter PAGE, R. H. 3 E.

Page. Come, gentle master Slender, come; we stay for you.

Slon. I'll eat nothing; I thank you, sir.

Page. By cock and pye, you shall not choose, sir; come, come.

(*Exit R. H. 3 R.*)

Slan. Nay, pray you, lead the way.

Anne. Come on, sir.

Slan. Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

Anne. Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

Slan. Truly I will not go first; truly-la; I will not do you that wrong.

Anne. I pray you, sir.

Slan. I'll rather be unmannerly, than troublesome. (*Crosses to R. H.*) You do yourself wrong, indeed-la.

(*Exeunt R. H. 3 R.*)

"SCENE II. — *A Room in Page's House.*

Enter EVANS, with a letter, and SIMPLE, R. H.

Eva. Go your ways, and ask of Dr. Caius' house, which is the way; and there dwells one mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

Sim. Well, sir.

Eva. Nay, it is petter yet; give her this letter; for it is a 'oman that altogether's acquaintance with mistress Anne Page; and the letter is, to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to mistress Anne Page. I pray you begone. (*Exit SIMPLE, L. H.*) I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come.

(*Exit R. H.*)

SCENE III. — *The Garter Inn.*

Enter FALSTAFF, PISTOL, Nym and ROBIN, R. H.

Fal. Which of you know Ford, of this town?

Pist. I ken the wight; he is of substance good.

Fal. My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

Pist. Two yards, and more.

Fal. No quips now; Pistol! Indeed I am in the waist two

2*

yards about; but I am now about no waist, I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation; I can construe the action of her familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behavior, to be English'd rightly, is, *I am Sir John Falstaff's*. (*Crosses L. H.*)

Pist. (R. C. *aside to Nym*.) He hath studied her well; and translated her well, out of honesty into English.

Fal. Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse; she hath a legion of angels.

Nym. (R.) The humor rises; it is good; humor me the angels.

Fal. I have writ me here a letter to her; and here another to Page's wife; who even now gave me good eyes too, examin'd my parts with most judicious eye-liads; sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly person. (*Cross R. H.*)

Pist. (L.) Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

Nym. (C.) I thank thee for that humor.

Fal. (*Crosses centre from R. H.*) O, she did so course-o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning glass! (*A long vain self conceited chuckle.*) She bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheater to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this letter to mistress Page; and thou this to mistress Ford; we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Pist. (L.) Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become, And by my side wear steel? Then, Lucifer take all! (*Goes up stage in a pompous manner and stands L. of ROBIN.*)

Nym. (R.) I will run no base humor; here, take the humor letter; (*gives him letter*.) I will keep the 'havior of reputation. (*Goes up stage in a pompous manner and stands R. of ROBIN.*)

Fal. (C.) Hold, sirrah, (*to ROBIN who is up C. comes down L. C.*) bear you these letters tightly; (*gives letters to ROBIN.*) Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.

(*Exit ROBIN, L. H. 1 E.*)

Hogues, hence! avaunt! (*FALSTAFF goes to L. H. turns and speaks, drives them round stage—FALSTAFF on L. H. tired out—PISTOL and NYM on R. C. laughing at him.*)

Vanish like hail stones, go :
Trudge, plod, away, o'the hoof ; seek shelter, pack !
Falstaff will learn the humor of this age,
French thrift, you rogues ; myself, and skirted page.

Exit L. H. 1 B.)

Nym. (R.) I have operations in my head, which be humors
of revenge.

Pist. (L.) Wilt thou revenge ?

Nym. By welkin, and her star !

Pist. With wit, or steel ? (*Going 1 E. L. H.*)

Nym. With both humors. (*Going to 1 B. R.*)

I will discuss the humor of his love to Page.

Pist. And I to Ford shall eke unfold,
How Falstaff, varlet vile,
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

(*Exeunt PISTOL, 1 B. L. NYM 1. B. R.*)

SCENE IV.—*Antique Chamber in Dr. Caius' House, D. F. R.*
practical.

Enter MRS. QUICKLY, with a letter and SIMPLE R. H.)

Quick. What ; John Rugby !

Enter RUGBY, L. H.

I pray thee, go to the casement, and see if you can see my master,
master Doctor Caius, coming ; if he do, i'faith, and find any body
in the house, here will be an old abusing of the king's English.

Rug. I'll go watch.

Quick. Go ; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in
faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire. (*Exit RUGBY, L. H.*)

An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in
house withal ; and, I warrant you no tell-tale ; but let that pass.
Peter Simple you say your name is ?

Sim. Ay, for fault of a better.

Quick. And master Slender's your master ?

Sim. Ay, forsooth.

Quick. A softly-sprighted man, is he not ?

Sim. Ay, forsooth ; but he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between this and his head ; he hath fought with a warrener.

Quick. How say you ? — O, I should remember him ; Does he not hold up his head, as it were ? and strut in his gait ?

Sim. Yes, indeed does he.

Quick. Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune ! Tell master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your master ; Anne is a good girl, and I wish —

Enter RUGBY, L. H.

Rug. Out, alas ! here comes my master. (*Exit L. H.*)

Quick. We shall all be shent. Run in here good young man ; go into this closet. (*Shuts SIMPLE in the closet, R. H. D. F.*) He will not stay long What, John Rugby ! John, what John ! I say ! Go, John, go inquire for my master ; I doubt, he be not well, that he comes not home ; and down, down, a down-a, etc. (*Singing.*)

Enter DOCTOR CAIUS, L. H.

Caius. Vat is you sing ? I do not like dese toys ; pray you, go and vetch me in my closet un boitier verd ; a box, a green-a box : Do intend vat I speak ? a green-a box.

Quick. Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you. I am glad he went not in himself ; if he had found the young man, he would have been horned mad. (*Exit into D. F. R. H.*)

Caius. Fe, fe, fe, fe ! ma, foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais à la Cour, — la grande affaire.

Re-enter MRS. QUICKLY with a green box, D. F. R. H.

Quick. Is it this, sir ?

Caius. Oui ; mette le au mon pocket. Dépêchez quickly ; Vero is dat knave Rugby ?

Quick. What John Rugby! John!

Enter RUGBY L. H.

Rug. Here, sir.

Caius. You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby; Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to de court.

Rug. 'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

Caius. By my trot, I tarry too long :—Od's me! *Qu'ay j'oublie?* dere is some simples in my closet, that I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind. (Exit D. F. R. H.)

Quick. Ah me! he'll find the young man there, and be mad.

Caius. (*Within.*) *O diable! diable!* Vat is in my closet? Villainy, larron! Rugby, my rapier!

Enter CAIUS from D. F. R. H. pulling SIMPLE out by the collar.

Quick. (R.) Good master, be content.

Caius. (C.) Verefore shall I be content-a.

Quick. The young man is an honest man.

Caius. Vat shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

Quick. I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic; hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me from parson Hugh.

Caius. Vell.

Sim. (L.) Ay, forsooth, to desire her to —

Quick. Peace, I pray you.

Caius. Peace-a your tongue: — Speak-a your tale.

Sim. To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to mistress Anne Page for my master, in the way of marriage.

Quick. This is all, indeed, la, but I'll never put my finger in the fire, and need not.

Caius. Sir Hugh send-a-you? Rugby, *baillez* me some paper: Tarry you a little while on that spot. (*CAIUS places SIMPLE on L. C. and goes off D. F. R. H. with RUGBY.*)

Quick. Man, I'll do your master what good I can; and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master, — I may

call him my master, look you, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself.

Sim. 'Tis a great charge, to come under one body's hand.

Quick. Are you avis'd o' that? You shall find it a great charge: And to be up early, and down late; but notwithstanding, (to tell you in your ear; I would have no words of it;) my master himself is in love with mistress Anne Page; but, notwithstanding that, — I know Anne's mind, — that's neither here nor there.

Caius. (*Within D. F.*) Come along Jack Rugby. (*SIMPLE runs back to L. C. where CAIUS placed him.*)

Enter CAIUS and RUGBY from D. F. E. H. with a letter — RUGBY with CAIUS' red cloak and rapiers.

Caius. You jack'nape; give-a dis letter to Sir Hugh; by gar, it is a shallenge; I vill cut his troat in de Park; and I vill teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make; — you may be gone; it is not good you tarry here. (*Exit SIMPLE L. H. 1 E.*)

Quick. Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter for dat: — do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill kill de Jack priest; and I vill appoint mine host of *de Jarterre* to measure our weapon. By gar, I vill myself have Anne Page.

Quick. Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well.

Caius. (*Taking his scarlet cloak from RUGBY, MRS. QUICKLY giving him his cane and hat.*) Rugby come to the court vit me. By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door. Follow my heels, Rugby. (*CAIUS going L. H. RUGBY runs and treads on his heels.*) Ah! Jack-a-dandy, I tell you follow my heels, not tread on my heels.

(*Exeunt CAIUS and RUGBY L. H.*)

Quick. You shall have an fools-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that; never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

Fent. (*Within L. H.*) Who's within there, ho?

Quick. Who's there, I trow?

Enter FENTON, L. H. 1 E.

Fent. How now, good woman ; how dost thou ?

Quick. The better, that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fent. What news ? how does pretty mistress Anne ?

Quick. In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle ; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way ; I praise heaven for it.

Fent. Shall I do any good, thinkest thou ; shall I not lose my suit ?

Quick. Troth, sir, all is in his hands above ; but notwithstanding, master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you. Have not your worship a wart above your eye ?

Fent. Yes, marry, have I : what of that ?

Quick. Well, thereby hangs a tale ; good faith, it is such another Nan ; but I detest an honest maid as ever broke bread ; we had an hour's talk of that wart ; I shall never laugh but in that maid's company ! But, indeed, she is given too much to allicholly and musing : But for you — Well, go to.

Fent. Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money for thee ; let me have thy voice in my behalf ; if thou seest her before me, commend me —

Quick. Will I ? ay, i' faith, that we will, and I will tell your worship more of the wart the next time we have confidence ; and of other wooers.

Fent. Well, farewell ; I am in great haste now.

(Exit L. H. D.)

Quick. Farewell to your worship. Truly, an honest gentleman ; but Anne loves him not ; I know Anne's mind as well as another does : Out upon't ! what have I forgot ?

(Exit R. H.)

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Windsor Castle in the distance — Page's House 3 E. E.*
as in Act I, Scene 1.

Enter MRS. PAGE, reading a letter, E. H. 3 E.

Mrs. Page. What, have I 'scap'd love letters in the holiday-time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? Let me see: (*Reads.*)

"Ask me no reason why I love you; for, though love use reason for his precision, he admits him not for his counsellor! You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy; you are merry, so am I: Ha! ha! then there's more sympathy: You love sack, and so do I: Would you desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, mistress Page, (at the least, if the love of a soldier can suffice,) that I love thee: I will not say, pity me! 'tis not a soldier-like phrase; but I say love me. By me,

Thine own true knight,

By day or night

Or any kind of light,

With all his might,

For thee to fight. JOHN FALSTAFF."

What a Herod of Jewry is this? O wicked, wicked world! What an unweigh'd behavior has this Flemish drunkard pick'd out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company! How shall I be reveng'd on him? for reveng'd I will be, as sure as —

Enter MRS. FORD, L. H.

Mrs. Ford. (L.) Mrs. Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

Mrs. Page. (R.) And trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

Mrs. Page. 'Faith, but you do, in my mind.

Mrs. Ford. Well, I do then; yet I say, I could show you to the contrary: O, mistress Page, give me some counsel!

Mrs. Page. What's the matter, woman?

Mrs. Ford. O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honor!

Mrs. Page. Hang the trifle, woman; take the honor: What is it? dispense with trifles; what is it?

Mrs. Ford. I could be knighted.

Mrs. Page. What?

Mrs. Ford. Here, read, read; perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking. Oh! what tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tons of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be reveng'd on him? (*MRS. FORD reads letter — a copy of MRS. PAGE'S — aloud on L. H. MRS. PAGE looking over her letter aside, when MRS. FORD comes to the words "Mrs. Ford," MRS. PAGE stops her.*)

Mrs. Page. Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Ford. No — Ford! (*They compare letters and laugh.*) Did you ever hear the like?

Mrs. Page. Letter for letter; but that the name of Page and Ford differs! To thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter; but let thine inherit first; for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant, he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names.

Mrs. Ford. Why, this is the very same; the very hand, the very words. What doth he think of us?

Mrs. Page. Nay I know not: It makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for sure, unless he knew some strain in me, that I know not myself, he would never have attacked me in this fury. Let's be reveng'd on him; let's appoint him a meeting; give him a show of comfort in his suit; and lead him

on with a fine-baited delay, till he hath pawn'd his horses to mine host of the Garter.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against him, that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. Oh, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

Mrs. Page. Heaven be praised, my husband is as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause.

Mrs. Ford. You are the happier woman.

Mrs. Page. Let's counsel together against this greasy knight.
(*Looking off L. H.*) Look who comes yonder.

Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Quickly.

Mrs. Page. She shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.

Mrs. Ford. Trust me I thought on her; she'll fit it and will fit him. Come to prove it.
(*Exeunt 3 E. R. H.*)

Enter FORD with PISTOL and PAGE with NYM, 1 E. L. H. PAGE crosses behind to R. C.

Ford. (R. C.) Well, I hope it be not so.

Pist. (L. C.) Hope is a curtail-dog in some affairs:
Sir John affects thy wife;
He loves thy gally-mawfry; Ford, perpend.

Ford. Love my wife?

Pist. With liver burning hot: Prevent, or go thou,
Like Sir Actæon he, with Ring wood at thy heels:
O, odious is the name!

Ford. What name, sir?

Pist. The horn, I say: Farewell.

Take heed; have open eye; for thieves do foot by night:
Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo birds do sing.

Away, sir corporal Nym. (*Cross L. H.*)

Believe it, Page, he speaks sence.

(*Exit L. H.*)

Ford. (C.) I will be patient; I will find out this. (*FORD retires up C.*)

Nym. (L.) And this is true; I like not the humor of lying. He loves your wife; there's the short and the long. My name is corporal Nym; I speak and I vouch. 'Tis true; my name is Nym and Falstaff loves your wife. Adieu! I love not the humor

of bread and cheese; and there's the humor of it. Adieu!

(Exit L. H.)

Page. (R.) *The humor of it*, quoth's! here's a fellow frights humor out of his wits.

Ford. I will seek out Falstaff. If I do find it, well. (Comes forward.)

Page. (R.) I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest o' the town commended him for a true man.

Ford. (L.) 'Twas a good sensible fellow; well.

Page. How now, master Ford?

Ford. You heard what this knave told me; did you not?

Page. Yes; and you heard what the other told me?

Ford. Do you think there is truth in them?

Page. Hang 'em slaves! I do not think the knight would offer it; but these that accuse him in his intent towards our wives, are a yoke of his discarded men.

Ford. Were they his men?

Page. Marry, were they.

Ford. I like it never the better for that. Does he lie at the Garter?

Page. Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage towards my wife, I would turn her loose to him; and what he gets more of her than sharp words let it lie on my head.

Ford. I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loth to turn them together. A man may be too confident. I cannot be thus satisfied. (Crosses to R. H.)

Page. Look where my ranting host of the Garter comes; there is either liquor in his pate, or money in his purse, when he looks so merrily.

Enter Host, L. H.

How now, mine host?

Host. How now, bully-rook? Thou'rt a gentleman. (Calling off L. H.) Cavalero-justice, I say.

Enter SHALLOW, L. H.

Shal. I follow, mine host, I follow. (Crosses to PAGE on R. H.)

Good even, and twenty, good master Page! Master Page, will you go with us? we have sport in hand.

Host. Tell him, cavalero-justice; tell him, bully-rook.

Shal. Sir, there is a fray to be fought, between Sir Hugh the Welsh priest, and Caius the French doctor.

Ford. Good mine host o' th' Garter, a word with you.

Host. What say'st thou bully-rook? (*FORD and HOST retire up in conversation.*)

Shal. Will you go with us to behold it? My merry-host hath had the measuring of their weapons; and I think he hath appointed them contrary places; for, believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be. (*SHALLOW and PAGE retire up conversing.*)

(*FORD L. and HOST R. advance.*)

Host. Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavalier?

Ford. None, I protest! but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him and tell him, my name is Brook; only for a jest.

Host. Thy hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress; said I well? and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight. (*Crosses to L. H. SHALLOW and PAGE come down L. C.*) Will you go an-heirs?
(*Exit L. H.*)

Shal. Have with you, mine host.

Page. I have heard, the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

Shal. Tut, sir, I could have told you more; in these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccadoes, and I know not what; 'tis the heart, master Page; 'tis here; 'tis here. I have seen the time, with my long sword, I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

Re-enter HOST, L. H.

Host. Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag.

Page. Have with you. (*PAGE crosses L. H.*) I had rather hear them scold than fight.

(*Exeunt HOST, SHALLOW and PAGE, L. H.*)

Ford. (*Thoughtfully on R. C.*) Though Page be a secure fool, and stands so firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my

opinion so easily. She was in his company at Page's house; and what they made there, I know not. Well, I will look further into't; and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not my labor; if she be otherwise, 'tis labor well bestow'd.

(Exit L. H.)

SCENE II. — *The Garter Inn.*

Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL, L. H.

Fal. I will not lend thee a penny.

Pist. Why, then the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.

Fal. Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn; I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow, Nym; or else you had look'd through the grate like a geminy of baboons. I am damn'd for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers, and tall fellows; and when mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took't upon mine honor, thou hadst it not.

Pist. Didst thou not share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?
(*Astonished at FALSTAFF's ingratitude.*)

Fal. Reason, you rogue, reason: Think'st thou I'll endanger my soul *gratis*? At a word, hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you; go. You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue! you stand upon your honor! Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do, to keep the terms of my honor precise. I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honor in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags, your eat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honor! You will not do it, you? (*Kicks at him, goes up and sits in arm chair L. of table — a pause — PISTOL on L. goes entreatingly to FALSTAFF.*)

Pist. I do relent. What would'st thou more of man?

Enter ROBIN, L. H. 1 E.

Rob. Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

Fal. Let her approach. *(Exit ROBIN L. H. 1 E.)*

Hence, rogue, avaunt. *(FALSTAFF turns away from PISTOL, who approaches him on his L. as he nears him, he raises cane to strike PISTOL, who runs off L. H.)* Go steal and hang.

(Exit PISTOL, L. H. 1 E.)

Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, L. H. 1 E.

Quick. Give your worship good-morrow.

Fal. Good-morrow, good wife.

Quick. Not so, an't please your worship.

Fal. Good maid, then.

Quick. There is one mistress Ford, sir; I pray, come a little nearer this way. *(FALSTAFF comes down E. C.)* I myself dwell with master Doctor Caius. *(In loud whisper.)*

Fal. Well, on: Mistress Ford, you say. I warrant thee nobody hears. Well: Mistress Ford; what of her?

Quick. Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord, lord! your worship's a wanton.

Fal. Mistress Ford; come, mistress Ford, —

Quick. Marry, this is the short and the long of it. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary as you have. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen; and in such alligant terms, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get any eye-wink of her.

Fal. But what says she to me? Be brief, my good she Mercury.

Quick. Marry, she hath received your letter; for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify, that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

Fal. Ten and eleven?

Quick. Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture. *(Pause — they exchange significant glances.)*

Fal. The picture? *(A laugh.)*

Quick. Ay, the picture? She says, that you wot of; master

Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas ! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him ; he's a very jealous man.

Fal. Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to her ; I will not fail her.

Quick. Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to your worship. Mistress Page (*they laugh,*) hath her hearty commendations to you too ; and, let me tell you in your ear, she's as virtuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other ; and she bade me tell your worship, that her husband is seldom from home ; but, she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man ; surely, I think you have charms, la ; yes, in truth.

Fal. Not I, I assure thee ; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms.

Quick. Blessing on your heart for't !

Fal. But, I pray thee, tell me this ; has Ford's wife, and Page's wife, acquainted each other how they love me ?

Quick. That were a jest, indeed ! they have not so little grace, I hope ; that were a trick, indeed ! But mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves ; her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page. You must send her your page ; no remedy.

Fal. Why, I will.

Quick. And look you, he may come and go between you both ; and, in any case, have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand anything ; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness ; old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say.

Fal. Fare thee well ; commend me to them both ; there's my purse. (*Gives purse.*) I am yet thy debtor. — Boy ?

Enter ROBIN, L. H. 1 E.

Go along with this woman.

(*Exeunt* MRS. QUICKLY and ROBIN, L. H. 1 E.)

This news distracts me. Say'st thou so, old Jack ? go thy ways ; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet

look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now, a gainer? Good body, I thank thee.

Enter BARDOLPH, L. H. with a salver covered with napkin, on it a tankard of sack and a folded napkin on it.

Bar. Sir John, there's one master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

Fal. (*Tastes sack.*) Brook; is his name?

Bard. Ay, sir.

Fal. Call him in. (*Exit BARDOLPH L. H. 1 E.*)

Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow such liquor. Ah! ah! mistress Ford and mistress Page, have I encompass'd you? go to; *via!*

Re-enter BARDOLPH, and FORD disguised, L. H. FALSTAFF is drinking with his back towards FORD, when he enters L. H. but when he speaks, FALSTAFF turns to him — rises.

Ford. Bless you, sir.

Fal. And you, sir; would you speak with me?

Ford. I make bold, to press with so little preparation upon you.

Fal. You're welcome. (*FORD crosses to R. H.*) What's your will? Give us leave, drawer. (*Exit BARDOLPH L. H.*)

Ford. (*R.*) Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

Fal. (*L.*) Good master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you. (*Drinks to him.*)

Ford. Good, sir John, I sue for yours; not to charge you; for I must let you understand, I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are; the which hath something embolden'd me to this unseasoned intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

Fal. Money is a good seldier, sir, and will on.

Ford. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me; if you will help me to bear it, sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

Fal. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

Ford. I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

Fal. Speak, good master Brook; I shall be glad to be your servant. (*SIR JOHN and FORD bring down table and chairs to c. l. e. they sit, FORD on R. H. FALSTAFF on L. H.*)

Ford. Sir, I will be brief with you. You have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection; but good, Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know, how easy it is to be such an offender.

Fal. Very well, sir; proceed.

Ford. There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is Ford.

Fal. (*Appears disconcerted till he ascertains all is right.*) Ford! well, sir!

Ford. I have long lov'd her, and, I protest to you, bestow'd much on her; follow'd her with a doating observance; fee'd every slight occasion, that could but niggardly give me sight of her; briefly, I have pursued her as love hath pursued me, which hath been, on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind, or in my means, meed I am sure I have receiv'd none, unless experience be a jewel, that I have purchased at an infinite rate.

Fal. Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands? (*Laughing.*)

Ford. Never.

Fal. Have you importuned her to such a purpose?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Of what quality was your love then?

Ford. Like a fair house, built upon another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice, by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Fal. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

Ford. When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say, that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places, she

enlargeth her mirth so far, that there is shrewd constructions made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: You are a gentleman of excellent breeding, (*Sir John rises and bows to Ford, who rises*) admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allow'd for your many warlike, courtlike, and learned preparations.

Fal. O, sir!

Ford. Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend it, spend it: spend more! spend all I have: only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife: use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any.

Fal. Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy! Methinks, you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

Ford. O, understand my drift: She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be looked against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves: I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage vow, and a thousand other defences, which now are too strongly embattled against me. What say you to't, Sir John?

Fal. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

Ford. O good sir!

Fal. Master Brook, I say you shall.

Ford. Want no money, Sir John, you shall want none.

Fal. Want no mistress Ford, master Brook, you shall want none. I shall be with her (I may tell you) by her own appointment; even as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-between, parted from me: I say, I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave, her husband will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

Ford. I am bless'd in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, sir?

Fal. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! (*Laughs.*) I know him not: yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say, the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money: for the which his wife seems to me well favoured. (*Laughs.*) I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home.

Ford. I would you knew Ford, sir: that you might avoid him, if you saw him.

Fal. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns; Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate o'er the peasant, and thou shalt sleep with his wife. (*Crosses to R. H. Both laugh.*) Come to me soon at night: Ford's a knave and I will aggravate his style; thou, master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night. (*Exit R. H.*)

Ford. What a damn'd Epicurean rascal is this!—My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? My wife hath sent to him, the hour is fix'd, the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abus'd, my coffers ransack'd, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names!—Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends: but cuckold! wittol cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife, he will not be jealous; I will rather trust parson Hugh the Welchman, with my cheese, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself: then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may affect, they will break their hearts but they will affect. Heaven be prais'd for my jealousy! Ten o'clock the hour; I will prevent this, detect my wife, be reveng'd on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours to soon, than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold! (*Exit L. H.*)

(*Waiter, Supes, enter 2 R. R. and clear stage.*)

Fal.

SCENE III. — *Windsor Park.**Enter CAIUS and RUGBY, R. H. 2 H.**Caius.* Jack Rugby!*Rug.* Sir.*Caius.* Vat is the clock, Jack?*Rug.* 'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promis'd to meet.*Caius.* By gar, he has saved his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his Pible vell, dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.*Rug.* He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill him.*Caius.* By gar, de herring is no dead, so as I vill kill him. Take your rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.*Rug.* Alas, sir, I cannot fence.*Caius.* Villainy, take your rapier.*Rug.* Forbear here's company. (*Fight one round with rapiers.*)*Enter HOST, SHALLOW, PAGE and SLENDER, L. H. 2 H.**Host.* 'Bless thee, bully doctor.*Shal. (C.)* 'Save you, master doctor Caius.*Page. (L. C.)* Now, good master doctor!*Slen.* Give you good-morrow, sir.*Caius. (R.)* Vat be all you, one, two, three, four, come for?*Host. (R. C.)* To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my Francisco? ha, bully! What says my Æsculapius? my Galen? my heart of elder? ha! is he dead bully Stale? is he dead?*Caius.* By gar he is de coward of the world, he is not show his face.*Host.* Thou art a Castilian king, Urinal! Hector of Greece, my boy!*Caius.* I pray you, bear vittness that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

Shal. He is the wiser man, master doctor ; he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies ; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions ; is it not true, master Page ?

Page. Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

Shal. Body-kins, master Page, though now I be old, and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one ; though we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen, master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us ; we are the sons of women, master Page.

Page. 'Tis true, master Shallow.

Shal. It will be found so, master Page. Master doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace ; you have show'd yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh hath shown himself wise and a patient churchman ; you must go with me, master doctor.

Host. Pardon, guest justice. A word, monsieur mock water.

Caius. Mock-vater ! vat is dat ?

Host. Mock-water, in our English tongue, is valor, bully.

Caius. By gar, then I have as much mock-vater as de Englishman. Scurvy-jack-dog priest ! by gar, me vill cut his ears.

Host. He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

Caius. Clapper-de-claw ! vat is dat ?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Caius. By gar, me do look, he shall clapper-de-claw me ; for, by gar, me vill have it.

Host. And I will provoke him to 't, or let him wag.

Caius. Me tank you for dat. (*Goes up to RUGBY back c.*)

Host. And moreover, bully, — but first master guest, and master Page, and eke cavalero Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore. (*Aside to PAGE and SHALLOW.*)

Page. Sir Hugh is there, is he ?

Host. He is there ; see what humor he is in ; and I will bring the doctor about by the fields ; will it do well ?

Shal. We will do it.

All. Adieu good master doctor.

(*Exeunt PAGE and SHALLOW, L. H.*)

Slender. Oh ! sweet Anne Page !

(*Exit L. H.*)

Caius. By gar, me vill kill de Welshman; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

Host. Let him die; but, first, sheath thy impatience; throw cold water on thy choler; go about the fields with me through Frogmore; I will bring thee where mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a feasting; and thou shalt woo her; said I well?

Caius. By gar, me tank you for dat; by gar, I love you; and I shall procure-a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentleman, my patients.

Host. For the which, I will be thy adversary towards Anne Page; said I well?

Caius. By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

Host. Let us wag then.

Caius. Come at my heels, Jack Rugby. (*RUGBY follows behind CAIUS, in doing so he treads on his heels.* *Exeunt L. R.*)

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Frogmore.* A large set tree in centre for SLENDER to climb and look through the branches to observe the action of scene on stage.

Enter EVANS R. H. 3 E. with a Book in his hand, followed by SIMPLE with EVANS' black Gown and Rapier.

Eva. (R.) I pray you now, good master Slender's serving man, and friend Simple by your name, which way have you looked for master Caius, that calls himself *Doctor of Physic*?

Sim. (L.) Marry, sir, the City-ward, the Park-ward, every way; Old Windsor way, and every way but the town way.

Eva. I most feheemently desire you, you will also look that way.

Sim. I will, sir.

(*Exit L. H. 2 E.*)

Eva. 'Pless my soul! how fall of cholars I am, and tremping of mind! I shall be glad if he have deceived me; how melancholies I am! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard, when I have good opportunities for the 'ork; 'pless my soul! (*He reads two lines and sings — then reads and sings the last two.*)

By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals;
There will we make our peds of roses,
And a thousand vagrant posies.

By shallow —

Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry. (*Sings.*)

Melodious birds sing madrigals; —

Enter SIMPLE, L. H. 2 E.

Sim. Yonder he is, coming this way, Sir Hugh.

Eva. He's welcome. (*Sings.*)

By shallow rivers, to whose falls —

Heaven prosper the right! What weapons is he?

Sim. No weapons, sir! (*looking off 2 E. L.*) There comes my master, master Shallow, and another gentleman from Frogmore, over the stile, this way.

Eva. 'Pray you, give me my gown; or else keep it in your arms.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW and SLENDER, L. H. 2 E.

Shal. (c.) How now, master parson? Good-morrow, good sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

Slen. (L.) Ah, sweet Anne Page!

Page. (L. c.) 'Save you, good sir Hugh!

Eva. (R. c.) 'Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

Shal. What! the sword and the word! do you study them both, master parson?

Page. And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatic day?

Eva. There is reasons and causes for it.

Page. We are come to you, to do a good office, master parson.

Eva. Fery well: What is it?

Page. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having receiv'd wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience, that ever you saw.

Shal. I have liv'd fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of his place, gravity and learning, so wide of his own respect.

Eva. What is he?

Page. I think you know him; master Dector Caius, the renown'd French physician.

Eva. Heaven's will, and his passion o' my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

Page. Why.

Eva. He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen, — and he is a knave besides; a cowardly knave, as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

Page. I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

Shen. O, sweet Anne Page!

Shal. It appears so, by his weapons: Keep them asunder; here comes Doctor Caius.

Enter HOST, CAIUS and RUGBY, L. 2 R.

Page. Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

Shal. So do you, good master doctor.

Page. Disarm them, and let them question. (*PAGE and HOST takes the rapiers from them.*) Let them keep their limbs whole, and hack our English.

Caius. (*To EVANS.*) I pray you, let a-me speak a word vit your ear: Verefore vill you not meet a-me? *PAGE, SHALLOW and HOST retires up C. CAIUS on L. EVANS on R. down in front. RUGBY and SIMPLE up C. 3 G.*

Eva. (*R.*) 'Pray you use your patience; in good time.

Caius. (*L.*) By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

Eva. 'Pray you, let us not be laughing-stogs to other men's humors; I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends: I will knog your urinals about your knave's cogs-combs, for missing your meetings and appointments. (*They pull off each others wigs — throw them at each other, struggle and clasp each other, fall down and roll over and over; after awhile they are separated by PAGE and HOST. PAGE assists EVANS and supports him on his knee. HOST assists CAIUS and supports him on his knee — where they are held by PAGE and HOST; they rise three times and attempt to get at each other, but are held back by PAGE and HOST. During the fight SLENDER ascends tree in c. and says, "Sweet Anne Page." RUGBY and SIMPLE go through the same business at back that is done in front by their masters. SHALLOW picks up CAIUS' cloak and gives it to RUGBY. CAIUS and EVANS are now released.*)

Caius. Diable! Jack Rugby, mine Host de Jarterre, have I not stay for him, to kill him? have I not, at de place I did appoint?

Eva. As I am a christians soul, now, look you, this is the place appointed; I'll be judgement by mine host of the Garter. (*EVANS and CAIUS advance c. to renew the fight, HOST comes between them and stops it.*)

Host. Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer.

Cains. Ay, dat is very good! excellent!

Host. Peace, I say; hear mine host of the Garter. Am I politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions, and the motions. Shall I lose my parson? my priest? my sir Hugh? no; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial. (*CAIUS gives hand to HOST.*) So: Give me thy hand, celestial. (*EVANS gives hand to HOST, the HOST then brings them together and joins their hands in token of reconciliation.*) So. Boys of art, I have deceiv'd you both; I have directed you to wrong places; your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue. Come, (*crosses L.*) lay thy swords to pawn. Follow me, lad of peace; follow, follow, follow.

Shal. Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

(*Exeunt HOST, SHALLOW, PAGE and SIMPLE, L. H.*)

Sen. Oh! Sweet Anne Page. (Exit L. H.)

Caius. Ha! do I perceive dat? have you make a desot of us? ha, ha!

Eva. This is well; he has made us his vlouting-stog. I desire you, that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together, to be revenge on this same scall, scurvy, cogging companion, the host of the Garter. (They pick up wigs, get the wrong ones, exchange them, put them on, etc. CAIUS puts on his cloak.)

Caius. By gar, vit all my heart; he promise to bring me vere is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me too.

Eva. Well, I will smite his noddles. (They embrace.) 'Pray you follow.

Caius. Jack Rugby you follow me. (EVANS and CAIUS exeunt arm in arm, l E. L. H.)

(RUGBY and SIMPLE come forward—embrace—and go off
l E. L. arm and arm.

SCENE II.—A Road.

Enter ROBIN and MRS. PAGE, L. H.

Mrs. Page. Nay, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather lead, mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

Rob. I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man, than follow him like a dwarf.

Mrs. Page. O, you are a flattering boy; now I see you'll be a courtier.

Enter FORD, R. H.

Ford. Well met, mistress Page; whither go you?

Mrs. Page. Truly, sir, to see your wife. "Is she at home?"

Ford. Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company: I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

Mrs. Page. Be sure of that, — two other husbands.

Ford. Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

Mrs. Page. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is, my husband had him of. What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

Rob. (c.) Sir John Falstaff.

Ford. (R.) Sir John Falstaff!

Mrs. Page. (L.) He, he; I can never hit on's name. There is such a league between my good man and he! Is your wife at home, indeed?

Ford. Indeed she is.

Mrs. Page. By your leave, sir. (*Cross R. H.*) I am sick till I see her.
(*Exeunt MRS. PAGE and ROBIN, R. H.*)

Ford. Has Page any brains? hath he any eyes? hath he any thinking? Sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why this boy will carry a letter twenty miles, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage; and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. Good plots! they are laid! and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him, then torture my wife; pluck the borrow'd veil of modesty from the so seeming mistress Page; divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actæon. (*The clock strikes ten.*) The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search; there I shall find Falstaff. I shall be rather prais'd for this, than mock'd; for it is as positive as the earth is firm, that Falstaff is there.

Enter SHALLOW, PAGE, HOST, SLENDER, EVANS and CAIUS (arm and arm,) RUGBY and SIMPLE (arm and arm.)

Shallow, Page, etc. Well met, master Ford.

Ford. (R.) Trust me, a good knot. I have good cheer at home; and, I pray you, all go with me.

Shal. (c.) I must excuse myself, master Ford.

Slen. And so must I, sir; we have appointed to dine with mistress Anne, and I would not break with her, for more money than I'll speak of.

Shal. We have linger'd about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

Slen. (L. c.) I hope, I have your good will, father Page.

Page. (L. C.) You have, master Slender; I stand wholly for you; but my wife, master doctor, is for you altogether.

Caius. (L.) Ay, by gar! and de maid is love-a me; my nursh-a Quickly tell me so mash.

Host. (L. C.) What say you to young master Fenton? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth; he writes verses, he speaks holiday; he smells April and May; he will carry't, he will carry't; 'tis in his buttons; he will carry't.

Page. Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having, he kept company with the wild Prince and Poins; he is of too high a region, he knows too much; my consent goes not that way.

Ford. I beseech you heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner; besides your cheer you shall have sport; I'll show you a monster. Master doctor, you shall go; so shall you, master Page; and you, Sir Hugh.

Shal. Well, fare you well. We shall have the freer wooing at master Page's. (*Exeunt SHALLOW and SIMPLE, L. H. 1 E.*)

Slen. O, sweet Anne Page! (*Exit L. H.*)

Host. Farewell, my hearts; I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him. (*Exit L. H.*)

Ford. I think I shall drink in pipe wine first with him; I'll make him dance. Will you go gentles?

(*Exeunt FORD, PAGE and EVANS, R. H.*)

Caius. Go home, John Rugby, I come anon.

(*Exeunt CAIUS R. H. and RUGBY L. H.*)

SCENE III. — *Ford's House.* Set door R. 2 E. level with the wing to open on stage. Set door 1 E. L. H.

Enter MRS. FORD and MRS. PAGE, R. H.

Mrs. Ford. What, John! what, Robert!

Mrs. Page. Quickly, quickly; is the buck-basket —

Mrs. Ford. I warrant. What Robin, I say.

Enter JOHN and ROBERT, L. H. 2 E. with a large buck-basket.

Mrs. Page. Come, come, come.

Mrs. Ford. Here, set it down. (*They place it c.*)

Mrs. Page. Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

Mrs. Ford. Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard-by in the brew-house; and, when I suddenly call you, come forth, and (without any pause or staggering,) take this basket on your shoulders; that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet-mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch, close by the Thames' side.

Mrs. Page. You will do it?

Mrs. Ford. I have told them over and over; they lack no direction. Be gone, and come when you are call'd.

(*Exeunt JOHN and ROBERT, 2 E. L. H.*)

Mrs. Page. Here comes little Robin.

Enter ROBIN, R. H. 1 E.

Mrs. Ford. How now, my eyas-musket? what news with you?

Rob. My master, Sir John, is come in at the back door mistress Ford, and requests your company.

Mrs. Page. You little Jack-a-lent, have you been true to us?

Rob. Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your being here; and hath threaten'd to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for he swears he'll turn me away.

Mrs. Page. Thou'rt a good boy; this secresy of thine shall be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose. I'll go hide me.

Mrs. Ford. Do so. Go and tell thy master, I am alone.

(*Exit ROBIN, R. H. 2 E.*)

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

Mrs. Page. I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me.

(*Exit L. H. 1 E.*)

Mrs. Ford. Go to then; we'll use this gross watery pumpion; we'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

Enter FALSTAFF, R. H. 2 E. followed by ROBIN, who passes behind to L. H. and off 2 E. L. H.

Fal. Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? Why, this is the

period of my ambition. (*Kisses her hand.*) O, this blessed hour.

Mrs. Ford. O, sweet Sir John!

Fal. Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish: I would thy husband were dead; I'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

Mrs. Ford. I your lady, Sir John! alas, I should be a pitiful lady.

Fal. Let the court of France show me such another; I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond: Thou hast the right arch'd-bent of the brow that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

Mrs. Ford. A plain kerchief, Sir John; my brows become nothing else; nor that well neither.

Fal. Thou art a traitor to say so: thou would'st make an absolute courtier: I see what thou wert, if fortune thy foe were not: nature is thy friend; come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs. Ford. Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

Fal. What made me love thee? Let that persuade thee, there's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog, and say, thou art this and that, like a many of these lisping hawthorn-buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simple-time; I cannot: but love thee; none but thee; and thou deservest it.

Mrs. Ford. Do not betray me sir; I fear, you love mistress Page.

Fal. Thou might'st as well say, I love to walk by the counter-gate; which is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.

Mrs. Ford. Well, heaven knows how I love you; and you shall one day find it.

Fal. Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

Enter ROBIN, 1 E. L. H.

Rob. Mistress Ford, mistress Ford! here's mistress Page at the door, looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

(*Exit 1 E. L. H.*)

Fal. She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

Mrs. Ford. 'Pray you, do, so; she's a very tattling woman.
(*Exit FALSTAFF 2 E. E. H. who remains at the door listening.*)

Enter ROBIN and MRS. PAGE, 1 E. L. H.

What's the matter? How now?

Mrs. Page. O, mistress Ford, what have you done? You're sham'd, you are overthrown, you are undone for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What's the matter, good mistress Page?

Mrs. Page. O, well a day, mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion?

Mrs. Ford. What cause of suspicion.

Mrs. Page. What cause of suspicion? Out upon you! how I am mistook in you?

Mrs. Ford. Why, alas! what's the matter?

Mrs. Page. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman, that, he says, is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. You are undone.

Mrs. Ford. Speak louder. (*Aside.*) 'Tis not so, I hope.

Mrs. Page. 'Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here; but, 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you; if you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but, if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amaz'd; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What shall I do? There is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame, so much as his peril; I had rather than a thousand pound, he were out of the house.

Mrs. Page. For shame, never stand *you had rather*; and *you had rather*; your husband's here at hand, bethink you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceiv'd me! Look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw the linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or, (it is whiting-time,) send him by your two men to Datchet-mead.

Mrs. Ford. He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

Enter FALSTAFF, 2 E. E. H.

Fal. Let me see't, let me see't! O, let me see't! I'll in, I'll in; follow your friend's counsel; I'll in.

Mrs. Page. What! Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

Fal. I love thee, and none but thee; help me away; let me creep in here; I'll never. (*He goes into the basket, they cover him with the linen.*)

Mrs. Page. Help to cover your master, boy: Call your men, mistress Ford. (*Exit ROBIN, 2 E. E.*) You dissembling knight!

Mrs. Ford. What, John, Robert, John!

Enter JOHN and ROBERT, L. H. 2 E.

Go, take up these clothes here, quickly: Where's the cowl-staff? Look, how you drumble; carry them to the laundress in Datchet-mead; quickly, come. (*JOHN and ROBERT raise basket and are going 1 E. L.*)

Enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS and EVANS, 1 E. L. While FORD is speaking the men are going off with basket, 1 E. L. H.

Ford. Pray you, come near; if I suspect without cause, why then make sport at me, then let me be your jest; I deserve it. How now? whither bear you this?

Mrs. Ford. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? you were best meddle with buck-washing.

Ford. Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck! Buck, buck, buck! Ay, buck; I warrant you, buck, and of the season too, it shall appear.

(*Exeunt JOHN and ROBERT with the basket, 1 E. L.*)

Gentlemen, I have dream'd to-night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys; ascend my chambers, search, seek, find out: I'll warrant, we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way first. (*FORD locks door 1 E. L. H.*) So, now escape.

Page. Good master Ford, be contented ; you wrong yourself too much.

Ford. True, master Page. Up, gentlemen ; you shall see sport anon. (*Crosses to R.*) Follow me, gentlemen.

(*Exit R. H. 1 E.*)

Page. (*Crosses R. H.*) Nay, follow him, gentlemen ; see the issue of his search.

(*Exit R. H. 1 E.*)

Eva. (*Crosses R. H.*) This is ferry fantastical humors, and jealousies.

(*Exit R. H. 1 E.*)

Caius. (*Crosses R. H.*) By gar, 'tis no de fashion of France ; it is not jealous in France.

(*Exit R. H. 1 E.*)

Mrs. Page. Is there not a double excellency in this ?

Mrs. Ford. I knew not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceiv'd, or Sir John.

Mrs. Page. What a taking was he in when your husband ask'd who was in the basket !

Mrs. Ford. I think, my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being here ; for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

Mrs. Page. I will lay a plot to try that. And we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we send that foolish carrion, mistress Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water ; and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment ?

Mrs. Page. We'll do it ; let him be sent for to-morrow eight o'clock, to have amends.

Re-enter FORD and PAGE, R. H. 1 E.

Ford. I cannot find him ; may be, the knave bragg'd of that he could not compass.

Mrs. Page. Heard you that ?

Mrs. Ford. Ay, ay ; peace ! You use me well, master Ford, do you ?

Ford. Ay, I do so.

Mrs. Ford. Heaven make you better than your thoughts !

(*Exit R. H. 1 E.*)

Ford. Amen.

Mrs. Page. You do yourself mighty wrong, master Ford.

(*Exit* 1 M. R. H.)

Ford. Ay, ay; I must bear it.

Enter EVANS, and CAIUS, R. H. 1 E.

Eva. (R. C.) If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!

Caius. (R. H.) By gar, nor I too; dere is no bodies.

Page. Fie, fie, master Ford! are you not asham'd? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not have your distemper in this kind, for the wealth of Windsor Castle.

Ford. (L. C.) 'Tis my fault, master Page: I suffer for it.

Eva. You suffer for a pad conscience; your wife is as honest a 'omans, as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

Caius. By gar, I see, 'tis an honest woman.

Ford. Well; I promis'd you a dinner. Come, come, walk in the park.

Page. (L. H.) Let's go, gentlemen; but trust me, we'll mock him, I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast; after, we'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush; shall it be so?

Ford. Anything. 'Pray you, go, master Page. (*FORD unlocks door* 1 E. L. *Exeunt* FORD and PAGE, D. 1 E. L.)

Eva. I pray you now, remembrance to-morrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

Caius. Dat is good; by gar, vit all my heart.

Eva. A lousy knave; to have his gibes, and his mockeries.

(*Exeunt* D. 1 E. L.)

SCENE IV.—*Page's House.*

Enter MRS. QUICKLY, SHALLOW, SLENDER, R. H. 1 E. and ANNE PAGE, who goes behind to L. C.

Shal. (R. C.) Break their talk, mistress Quickly ; my kinsman shall speak for himself.

Slen. (R. H.) I'll make a shaft, or a bolt on't : 'slid, 'tis but venturing.

Shal. Be not dismay'd.

Slen. No, she shall not dismay me ; I care not for that, but that I am afraid.

Quick. (L. C.) Hark ye ; master Slender would speak a word with you.

Anne. I come to him. (*Comes down the stage on L. H.*) This is my father's choice.

O, what a world of vile ill-favor'd faults.

Look handsome in three hundred pounds a-year ! (*Aside.*)

Shal. She's coming ; to her, coz. O boy, thou had'st a father ! (*pushing SLENDER across to centre. MRS. QUICKLY retires up R. C.*)

Slen. I had a father, mistress Anne ; my uncle can tell you good jests of him. 'Pray you, uncle, tell mistress Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

Shal. Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

Slen. Ay, that I do ; as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

Shal. He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slen. Ay, that I will, come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a 'squire.

Shal. He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

Anne. (L. H.) Good master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Shal. (R. H.) Marry, I thank you for it ; I thank you for that good comfort. She calls you coz ; I'll leave you. Come Mrs. Quickly, nurse !

(*Exeunt SHALLOW and MRS. QUICKLY, 1. E. R. H.*)

Anne. (L.) Now, master Slender.

Slen. (R.) Now, good mistress Anne.

Anne. What is your will ?

Slen. My will ? Od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed ! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven ; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

Anne. I mean master Slender, what would you with me ?

Slen. Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with

you. Your father, and my uncle, have made motions ; if it be my luck, so : if not, happy man be his dole. They can tell you how things go, better than I can ; you may ask your father ; there he is — let's go to him. Oh ! sweet Anne Page.

(*Exit ANNE PAGE, 1 E. L. followed by SLENDER.*)

SCENE V. — *The Garter Inn, 2 G. Plain table centre. One plain chair R. of table. Arm chair L. of table.*

Enter FALSTAFF, L. H. 1 E. throws down hat and cane on table centre.

Fal. Bardolph, I say

Enter BARDOLPH, 1 E. L. H.

Bard. Here, sir.

Fal. Go, fetch me a quart of sack ; put a toast in't. (*Exit BARDOLPH, L. H. 1 E.*) Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal ; and to be thrown into the Thames ? Well ; if I be serv'd such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drown'd a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' the litter : and you may know by my size, that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking ; if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drown'd, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow ; a death that I abhor ; for the water swells a man ; and what a thing should I have been, when I had been swell'd ! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Enter BARDOLPH, with the sack, L. H.

Bard. Here's mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

Fal. Come, let me pour in some sack to the Thames water ; for my belly's a cold, as if I had swallow'd snow-balls. Call her in.

Bard. Come in, woman.

Enter MRS. QUICKLY, L. H. 1 B.

Quick. By your leave; I cry you mercy: Give your worship good-morrow.

Fal. Go brew me a pottle of sack finely.

Bard. With eggs, sir? (*Turning up tankard to show the audience he has drank the quart.*)

Fal. Simple of itself. (*Exit Bardolph, L. H.*) How now?

Quick. Mary, sir, I come to your worship from mistress Ford.

Fal. Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough: I was throwa into the ford; I have my belly full of Ford.

Quick. Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men, they mistook her.

Fal. So did I mine, to build upon a foolish women's promise.

Quick. Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning *a-birding*: she desires you once more to come to her between *eight* and *nine*: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you *amends* I warrant you.

Fal. Well, (*Long pause; sulky, &c.*) I will visit her: Tell her so; and bid her think what a man is: let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

Quick. I will tell her.

Fal. Do so. Between nine and ten, say'st thou?

Quick. *Eight* and *nine*, sir.

Fal. Well, be gone: I will not miss her.

Quick. Peace be with you, sir! (*Exit L. H.*)

Fal. I marvel, I hear not of master Brook; he sent me word to stay within: I like his money well. O, here he comes.

Enter FORD, L. H. disguised.

Ford. Bless you, sir!

Fal. Now, master Brook?—you come to know what hath pass'd between me and Ford's wife?

Ford. That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

Fal. Master Brook, I will not lie to you; I was at her house the hour she appointed me.

Ford. And how sped you, sir?

Fal. Very ill-favor'dly, master Brook.

Ford. How so, sir? Did she change her determination?

Fal. No, master Brook: but the peaking cornuto her husband, master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embrac'd, kiss'd, protested, and as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provok'd and instigated by his distemper, and forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

Ford. What, while you were there?

Fal. While I was there.

Ford. And did he search for you, and could not find you?

Fal. You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one mistress Page; gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, by her invention, and Ford's wife's distraction, they convey'd me into a buck-basket.

Ford. A buck-basket!

Fal. By the lord, a buck-basket: ramm'd me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy napkins; that, master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villainous smell, that ever offended nostril.

Ford. And how long lay you there?

Fal. Nay, you shall hear, master Brook, what I have suffer'd, to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus cramm'd in the basket a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were call'd forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane: they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door; who ask'd them once or twice, what they had in their basket: I quak'd for fear, lest the lunatic knave would have search'd it; but fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well; on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, master Brook: I suffer'd the pangs of three several deaths: first, an intolerable fright, to be detected with a jealous bell-wether: next, to be compass'd like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head: and then, to be stopp'd in, like a strong distillation, with foul clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of

that — a man of my kidney — think of that — that am as subject to heat as butter ; a man of continual dissolution and thaw ; it was a miracle, to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stew'd in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cool'd, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horseshoe ; think of that — hissing hot — think of that, master Brook. (*Goes up and throws himself into arm chair L. of table.*)

Ford. In good sadness, sir, I am sorry, that for my sake you have suffer'd all this. My suit is then desperate ; you'll undertake her no more ?

Fal. (Rises.) Master Brook, I will be thrown into Ætna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a-birding : I have receiv'd from her another embassy of meeting : 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, master Brook.

Ford. 'Tis past eight already, sir.

Fal. Is it ? I will then address me to my appointment. (*Goes to table, takes hat and cane.*) Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed ; and the conclusion shall be crown'd with your enjoying her : Adieu. You shall have her, master Brook ; master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.

(*Exit L. H.*)

Ford. Hum ! ha ! is this a vision ? Is this a dream ? Do I sleep ? Master Ford, awake ; awake, master Ford ; there's a hole made in your best coat, master Ford. This 'tis to be married ! this 'tis to have linen, and buck-baskets ! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am : I will now take the lecher ; he's at my house ; he cannot 'scape me ; 'tis impossible he should ; he cannot creep into a halfpenny purse, nor into a pepper box ; but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid ; yet, to be what I would not, shall not make me tame ; if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me, I'll be horn mad. (*Exit L. H.*)

END OF ACT THREE.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Ford's House. Set door 2 E. R. Set door 1 E. L. The Buck-Basket discovered on in centre, with plenty of linen, and a very large bundle tied up in a white sheet at bottom, a quantity of white muslin on top, to have the appearance as if FALSTAFF was in the basket when FORD comes on.*

Enter FALSTAFF and MRS. FORD arm in arm, R. H.

Fal. Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance: I see, you are obsequious in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

Mrs. Ford. He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

Mrs. Page. (*Within L. H.*) What ho, gossip Ford! what ho!

Mrs. Ford. Step into the chamber, Sir John.

(*Exit FALSTAFF R. H. D. 2 E.*)

Enter MRS. PAGE, L. H. D. 1 E.

Mrs. Page. (*L. H.*) How now, sweetheart! Who's at home besides yourself?

Mrs. Ford. (*R. H.*) Why, none but mine own people.

Mrs. Page. Indeed?

Mrs. Ford. No, certainly. Speak louder. (*Aside.*)

Mrs. Page. Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here, —

Mrs. Ford. Why?

Mrs. Page. Why, woman, your husband is in his old luns again; he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind. I am glad the fat knight is not here.

Mrs. Ford. Why, does he talk of him?

Mrs. Page. Of none but him; and swears, he was carried out, the last time he search'd for him, in a basket; protests to my husband, he is now here: and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion; but I am glad the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

Mrs. Ford. I am undone! the knight is here.

Mrs. Page. Why, then thou art utterly sham'd, and he's but a dead man. (*FALSTAFF groans within R. H. D. 2 E.*) What a woman are you? Away with him, away with him; better shame than murder.

Mrs. Ford. Which way should he go? How should I bestow him? Shall I put him into the basket again?

Re-enter FALSTAFF, R. H. D. 2 E.

Fal. No, I'll come no more i' the basket. May I not go out, ere he come?

Mrs. Page. Alas, three of master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none should issue out; otherwise you might slip away ere he came.

Fal. What shall I do? I'll creep up into the chimney. (*Running about.*)

Mrs. Ford. There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces; creep into the kiln-hole.

Fal. Where is it?

Mrs. Ford. He will seek there, on my word. Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note. There is no hiding you in the house.

Fal. I'll go out then.

Mrs. Ford. If you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir John. Unless you go out disguis'd. *Mrs. Page*, how might we disguise him?

Mrs. Page. Alas the day, I know not. There is no woman's gown big enough for him; otherwise he might put on a hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape.

Fal. Good hearts, devise something; any extremity rather than a mischief.

Mrs. Ford. My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

Mrs. Page. On my word it will serve him; she's as big as he is; and there's her thrum hat, and her muffler too: Run up Sir John.

Mrs. Ford. Go, go, sweet Sir John. Mistress Page and I will look some linen for your head.

Mrs. Page. Quick, quick; we'll come dress you straight; put on the gown the while. *(Exit FALSTAFF, 1 E. R.)*

Mrs. Ford. I would my husband would meet him in this shape; he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears she's a witch; forbade her my house, and hath threaten'd to beat her. But is my husband coming?

Mrs. Page. Ay, in good sadness is he; and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.

Mrs. Ford. We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

Mrs. Page. Nay, but he'll be here presently: let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

Mrs. Ford. I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.

We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,

Wives may be merry, and yet honest too:

We do not act, that often jest and laugh;

'Tis old, but true, *Still swine eat all the draff.*

(Exit R. H. 1 E.)

Enter JOHN and ROBERT, L. 2 E.

Mrs. Ford. Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders; your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him; quickly dispatch. Now then to see Falstaff dress'd.

(Exit 1 E. R. H.)

Enter CAIUS, FORD, PAGE and EVANS, L. D. 1 E.

Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villains: Somebody call my wife. (*Exit JOHN R. H. 1 E.*) You, youth in a basket! O, you panderly rascals! there's a knot, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy, against me. Now shall the devil be sham'd. What! wife! I say! come, come forth; behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching.

Page. Why this passes! Master Ford you are not to go loose any longer; you must be pinion'd.

Eva. Why this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog!

Caius. *Ma foi*, master Ford, dis is not vell; *ma foi*.

Re-enter JOHN and MRS. FORD, R. H. 1 E.

Ford. So say I too, sir. Why, wife, wife. Come hither mistress Ford; mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

Mrs. Ford. Heaven be my witness, you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

Ford. Well said brazen-face; hold it out. Come forth, sirrah. (*Pulls the clothes out of the basket.*)

Page. This passes!

Mrs. Ford. Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.

Ford. I shall find you anon.

Eva. 'Tis unreasonable! Come away.

Ford. Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed out of my house yesterday in this basket. Why may not he be there again? In my house I am sure he is; my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen.

Mrs. Ford. If you find a man there he shall die a flea's death.

Ford. Well, he's not here I seek for.

Page. No, nor no where else but in your brain. (*JOHN and ROBERT replace clothes in buck-basket and carry it off 2 E. L.*)

Ford. Help to search my house this one time; if I find not what I seek, show no color for my extremity, let me for ever be your table sport; let them say of me, *As jealous as Ford, that search'd a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.* Satisfy me once more, once more search with me.

Mrs. Ford. (on R. H.) What ho, mistress Page! come you, and the old woman, down; my husband will come into the chamber.

Ford. (R. C.) Old woman! what old woman's that?

Mrs. Ford. Why, it is my maid's aunt, of Brentford.

Ford. A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element; we know nothing. (*Crosses to R. H.*) Come down you witch; you hag you; come down, I say.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, good sweet husband: good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

Enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, led by MRS. PAGE, R. H. 1 E.

Mrs. Page. Come, mother Prat, come, give me your hand.

Ford. I'll prat her. (*FORD passes MRS. PAGE over to his L. H.*) Out of my door, you witch! (*Beats him across to O. H. FALSTAFF curtsies to FORD who imitates him—he finally beats him cross to L. H. and out of the door 1 E. L. H.*) You hag, you baggage, you pole-cat, you ronyon! out! out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you.

Mrs. Page. Are you not asham'd? I think you have kill'd the poor woman.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, he will do it: 'Tis a goodly credit for you.

Ford. Hang her, witch!

Eva. By yea and no, I think the 'oman is a witch indeed: I like not when a 'omans has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler.

Ford. Will you follow, gentlemen! I beseech you follow; see but the issue of my jealousy; if I cry out thus upon no trail, never trust me when I open again. (*Exit R. H. 1 E.*)

Pags. Let's obey his humor a little further. Come, gentlemen.

Exeunt all but Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, R. H. 1 E.)

Mrs. Page. Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, by the mass, that he did not; he beat him most unpitifully, methought.

Mrs. Page. I'll have the cudgel hallow'd and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

Mrs. Ford. What think you? May we, with the warrant of womanhood, and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

Mrs. Page. The spirit of wantonness is sure scared out of him.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we tell our husbands how we have serv'd him?

Mrs. Page. Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the figures out of our husband's brains. If they can find in their hearts, the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

Mrs. Ford. I'll warrant they'll have him publicly sham'd; and methinks there would be no period to the jest, should he not be publicly sham'd.

Mrs. Page. Come, to the forge with it then—shape it; I would not have things cool. (Exeunt 1 M. R. H.)

SCENE II. — *Exterior of Ford's House, D. F. R. C. practical.*

Enter EVANS, PAGE, MRS. PAGE, FORD, MRS. FORD and CAIUS, from house D. F. R. C.

	MRS. PAGE.	
	FORD.	PAGE.
MRS. FORD.		EVANS.
		CAIUS.
R. H.		L. H.

Eva. 'Tis one of the best discretions of a 'omans as ever I did look upon.

Page. And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

Mrs. Page. Within a quarter of an hour.

Ford. Pardon me wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt ;
I rather will suspect the sun with cold,
Than thee with wantonness ; now doth thy honor stand,
In him that was of late a heretic,
As firm as faith.

Page. 'Tis well, 'tis well ; no more :
But let our plot go forward ; let our wives
Yet once again, to make us public sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him and disgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way than that they spoke of.

Page. How ! to send him word they'll meet him in the park
At midnight ! fie, fie ; he will never come.

Eva. You say he has been thrown into the rivers ; and hath
been grievously peaten, as an old 'oman ; me thinks there should
be terrors in him, that he should not come ; methinks his flesh is
punish'd, he shall have no desires.

Caius. So think I too, by gar.

Mrs. Ford. Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,
And let us two devise to bring him hither.

Mrs. Page. There is an old tale goes, that Herne, the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragged horns ;
And makes milch kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner.
You've heard of such a spirit ; and well you know,
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

Page. Why, yet there want not many that do fear
In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak ;
But what of this ?

Mrs. Ford. Marry, this is our device ;
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us,
Disguis'd like Herne, with huge horns on his head.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come,

And in this shape? When you have brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? What is your plot?

Mrs. Page. That likewise have we thought upon.
Nan Page my daughter, and my little son,
And three or four more of their growth, we'll dress
Like urchins, ouphes, and fairies, green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands: upon a sudden,
As Falstaff, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a saw pit rush at once
With some diffused song: upon their sight,
We two in great amazedness will fly:
Then let them all encircle him about,
And, fairy-like, to pinch the unclean knight;
And ask him, why, that hour of fairy revel,
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread
In shape profane?

Mrs. Ford. And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound.

Eva. It is admirable pleasures, and fery honest knaveries.

Mrs. Ford. Let us about it.

All. Come, come. (*All retire up and exeunt into house as drop rapidly descends.*)

END OF ACT FOUR.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *Ancient Street in Windsor. — Dark.*

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW and SLENDER, L. H.

Page. Come, come ; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch, till we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

Slen. Ay, forsooth ; I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another. I come to her in white, and cry, *mum* ; she cries, *budget* ; and by that we know one another.

Shal. That's good, too : But what needs either your *mum*, or her *budget* ? The white will decipher her well enough.

Page. The night is dark ; light and spirits will become it well. No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away ; follow me.

Slen. Sweet Anne Page ! (*Exeunt, R. H.*)

Enter MRS. PAGE and CAIUS, L. H.

Mrs. Page. Master Doctor, my daughter is in green ; when you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the deanery, and dispatch it quickly. Go before into the park ; we two must go together.

Caius. I know wat I have to do : Adieu. (*Exit R. H.*)

Mrs. Page. Fare you well, sir. My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff, as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter ; but 'tis no matter ; better a little chiding, than a great deal of heart-break.

Mrs. Ford. Where is Nan, now, and her troop of fairies? and the Welch devil, Evans?

Mrs. Page. They are all couch'd in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscur'd lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

Mrs. Ford. That cannot choose but amaze him.

Mrs. Page. If he be not amaz'd he will be mock'd; if he be amaz'd, he will every way be mock'd.

Mrs. Ford. We'll betray him finely.

Mrs. Page. Again such lewdsters,
Those that betray them do no treachery.

Mrs. Ford. The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak!

(*Exeunt R. H.*)

SCENE II. — *Windsor Park*, 6 G. — *Music.*

Enter EVANS and FAIRIES, L. H. 2 E.

(*The FAIRIES lay hold of each other's garments, and run after EVANS round the stage.*)

Eva. Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts; be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-'ords, do as I pid you; Come, come, trib, trib.

(*Exeunt R. H. 2 E.*)

(*When FAIRIES off R. 2 E. begin to strike 12 — at 7th stroke change to third Scene, quietly.*)

SCENE III. — *Another Part of the Park, 6 o. Herne's Oak, by Moonlight.*

Enter FALSTAFF, with a buck's head on, clanking a chain, L. H. 3 E.

Fal. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on: Now, the gods assist me! Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love set on thy horns. For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think i' the forest. Who comes here?

Enter MRS. FORD and MRS. PAGE, L. H. 3 E.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John? Art thou there, my deer?

Fal. Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of *Green Sleeves*; hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

Mrs. Ford. Mistress Page is come with me, sweet-heart.

Fal. Divide me like a bride-buck, each a haunch: I will keep my sides to my self, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am I a woodman? ha! Speak I like Herne the hunter? Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome! (*Noise by the FAIRIES within 4 E. E.*)

Mrs. Page. Alas! what noise?

Mrs. Ford. Heaven forgive our sins!

Fal. What shall this be?

Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. Away, away. (*MRS. FORD and MRS. PAGE run away, L. H. 3 E.*)

Fal. They are fairies: he, that speaks to them, shall die.

(*Music.* — *FALSTAFF lies down upon his face. Enter EVANS, ANNE PAGE, and others dressed as FAIRIES from 4 E. E. H. They dance round FALSTAFF three times and beat him with their wands, during the dance they sing.*)

CHORUS OF FAIRIES.

Trip away,
 Make no stay
 Meet we all by break of day.

(*SLENDER, DR. CAIUS and FENTON come on R. H. First time the FAIRIES dance round, CAIUS runs off R. with a FAIRY. Second time round, SLENDER runs off with another FAIRY. Third time, FENTON meets ANNE PAGE, who removes her veil aside, and they exeunt together R. H. Noise of horns heard U. E. L. H. The FAIRIES all run off U. E. R. FALSTAFF shows great terror. MR. FORD, MRS. FORD, MR. PAGE, MRS. PAGE and four servants, with lighted torches, enter 3 R. L. H. FORD and PAGE raise FALSTAFF.*)

Page. (R. C.) Nay, do not fly ; I think, we have watch'd you now ;

Will none but Herne the hunter, serve your turn ?

Mrs. Page. (R. H.) Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives ?

See you these, husband ? Do not these fair yokes

Become the forest better than the town ?

Ford. (L. C.) Now, sir, who's a cuckold now ? Master Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave ; here are his horns, master Brook. And, master Brook, he hath enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money ; which must be paid to master Brook.

Mrs. Ford. (L. C.) Sir John, we have had ill luck ; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always count you my deer.

Fal. I do begin to perceive, that I am made an ass.

Ford. Ay, and an ox too ; both the proofs are extant.

Fal. And these are not fairies ? I was three or four times in the thought, they were not fairies : and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief that they were fairies. See now,

how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent, when 'tis upon ill employment.

Eva. (L. H.) Sir John Falstaff, serve heaven, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

Ford. Well said, fairy Hugh.

Eva. And leave you your jealousies too, I pray you.

Ford. I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able to woo her in good English.

Fal. Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welch goat too? 'tis time I were choaked with a piece of toasted cheese.

Eva. Sees is not good to give putter; your pelly is all putter.

Fal. Sees and putter! Have I liv'd to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English?

Mrs. Page. Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

Ford. What, a hodge-pudding a bag of flax.

Mrs. Ford. A puff'd man?

Page. Old, cold, wither'd, and of intolerable entrails.

Ford. And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

Page. And as poor as Job?

Ford. And as wicked as his wife?

Eva. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack, and wine, and swearings, and starings, pribbles, and prabbles?

Fal. Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel; ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me; use me as you will.

Ford. Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to whom you should have been a pander; over and above that you have suffered, I think, to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, husband, let that go to make amends: Forgive that sum, and so we'll all be friends.

Ford. Well, here's my hand. (*They shake hands.*) All's forgiven at last.

Page. Yet be cheerful, knight; thou shalt eat a posset to-night

at my house; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee. Tell her, master Slender hath married her daughter.

Mrs. Page. Doctors doubt that; if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife. (*Aside.*)

Enter SLENDER, R. H.

Slender. Whoo, ho! ho! father Page!

Page. Son! how now? how now, son? have you despatch'd?

Slender. Despatch'd? I'll make the best in Gloucestershire know on't; would I were hang'd, la, else.

Page. Of what, son?

Slender. I came yonder at Eton to marry mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy: If it had not been i' the church, I would have swing'd him, or he should have swing'd me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir, and 'tis a post-master's boy.

Page. Upon my life, then you took the wrong.

Slender. What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

Page. Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you, how you should know my daughter by her garments?

Slender. I went to her in white, (*crosses to L. H.*) and cry'd, *mum*, and she cry'd *budget*, as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a post master's boy. (*Exit L. H.*)

Mrs. Page. Good George, be not angry; I knew of your purpose; turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

Enter CAIUS, R. H.

Caius. Vere is mistress Page? By gar, I am cozen'd; I ha' married *un garcon*, a boy; *un paisan*, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozened.

Mrs. Page. Why, did you take her in green?

Caius. Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy ; be gar, I'll raise all Windsor. (*Takes off hat, throws it down L. kicks hat off and follows L. H.*)

(*Exit L. H.*)

Ford. This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne ?

Page. My heart misgives me. Here comes master Fenton.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE, R. H. 1 E.

How now, master Fenton ?

Anne. Pardon, good father ! good my mother, pardon ! (*They kneel.*)

Page. Now, mistress ? how chance you went not with master Slender ?

Mrs. Page. Why went you not with master Doctor, maid ?

Fent. (*Arises.*) You do amaze her. Hear the truth of it.

You would have married her,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I long since contracted,
Are now so sure, that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy, that she hath committed :
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

Ford. Stand not amaz'd ; here is no remedy :
In love, the heavens themselves do guide the state ;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

Fal. (*Long loud laugh.*) I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanc'd.

Page. Well, what remedy ? Fenton, heaven give thee joy !
What cannot be eschew'd, must be embrac'd.

Fal. When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chas'd.

Eva. I will dance, and eat plums, at your wedding.

Mrs. Page. Well I will muse no further : Master Fenton,
Heaven give you many, many merry days !
Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh the sport o'er by a country fire ;
Sir John and all.

Ford. Let it be so: Sir John,
To master Brook you yet shall hold your word; (*a look of incredulity from FALSTAFF*)
For he to night, shall sleep with mistress Ford.

SITUATIONS.

MRS. PAGE. FALSTAFF.

MR. PAGE.

MRS. FORD.

ANNE PAGE.

MR. FORD.

FENTON

EVANS.

R. H.

L. H.

THE END.

680958



The Bottle
 Unprotected Female
 Turnpike Gate
 Nell Gwynne
 Three Cuckoos
 Three Princes
 Adam Buff
 Friend Waggles
 Not to be Done
 White Slave [his Progeny
 102, or the Veteran and
 Sent to the Tower
 Allow me to Apologize
 Temptation
 Teacher Taught
 Greek Slave
 Bould Soger Boy
 Azazel the Prodigal
 Robert the Bruce
 Ragged School
 Last of the Fairies
 Scarlet Mantle
 Alice May
 A Plain Cook
 Peter the Great
 Uncle Tom's Cabin
 (Olympic)
 Wellington and Waterloo
 The Gold Fiend
 Old Adam
 Ion
 Fazio
 The Lady of Lyons
 Richelieu
 The Wife
 The Honeymoon
 The School of Scandal
 Money
 The Stranger
 Grandfather Whitehead
 Richard III.
 Love's Sacrifice
 The Gamester
 A Cure for the Heartache
 The Hunchback
 Don Caesar de Bazan
 The Poor Gentleman
 Hamlet
 Charles II.
 Venice Preserved
 Pizarro
 The Love Chase
 Othello
 Lend Me Five Shillings
 Virginius
 The King of the Commons
 London Assurance
 The Rent Day
 Two Gentlemen of Verona
 The Jealous Wife
 The Rivals
 Perfection [Debts
 A New Way to Pay Old
 Look before You Leap
 King John
 The Nervous Man

Damon and Pythias
 The Clandestine Marriage
 William Tell [ding
 The Day After the Wed-
 Speed the Plough
 Romeo and Juliet
 Feudal Times
 Charles the Twelfth
 The Bridal
 The Follies of a Night
 The Iron Chest
 Faint Heart Never Won
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 Bertram
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 Twelfth Night
 Brutus
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 Beauty and the Beast
 St. Patrick's Eve
 Captain of the Watch
 The Secret
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 All that Glitters is not
 Gold
 Grimshaw, Bagshaw and
 Bradshaw
 Rough Diamond
 Bloomer Costume
 Two Bonnycastles
 Born to Good Luck
 Kiss in the Dark
 'T would Puzzle a Con-
 jurer
 Kill or Cure
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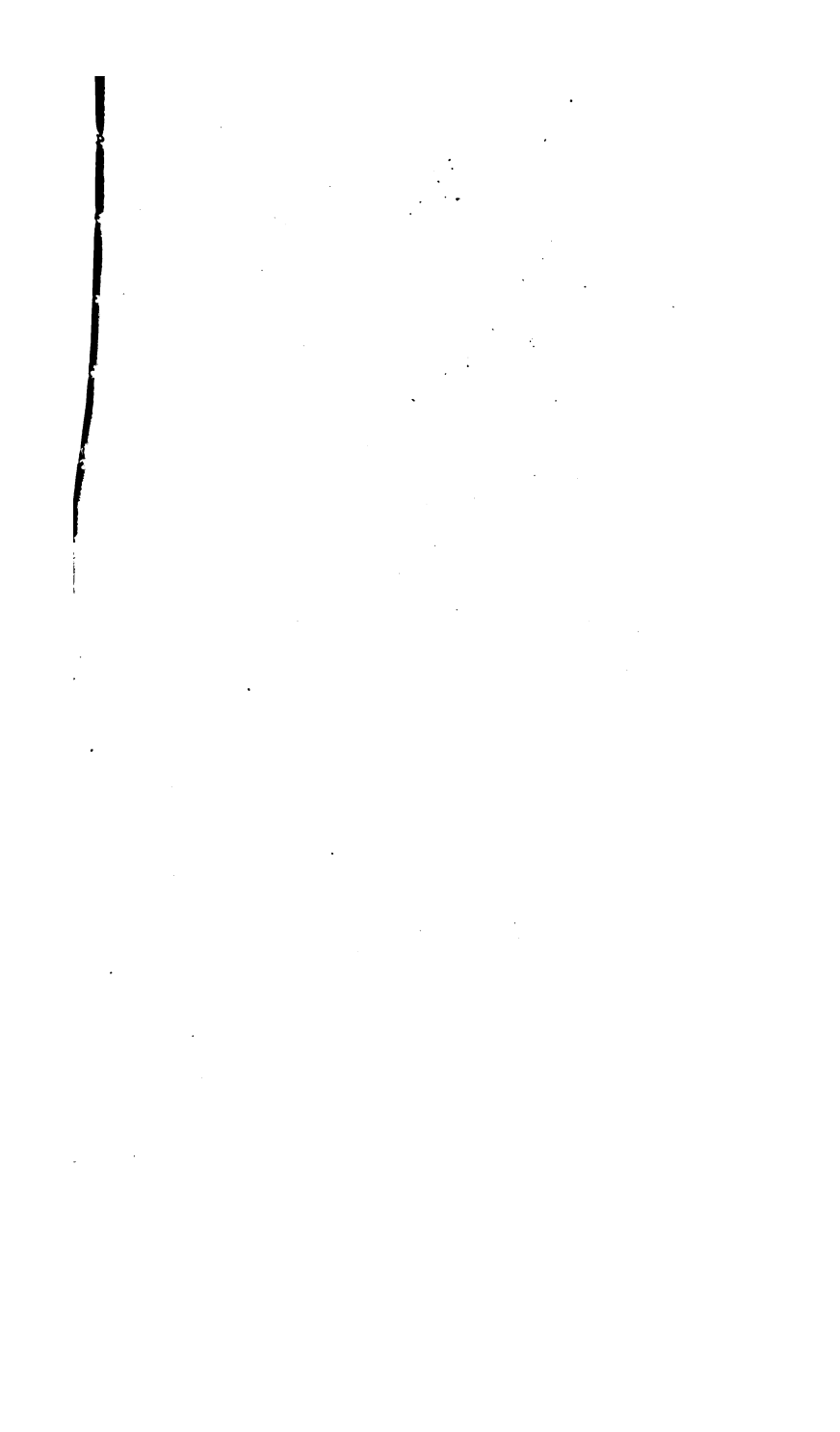
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